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NOTICE.

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All letters for publication should be written on one side of the paper only.

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, SEPTEMBER 10th, 1878.

In China, unfortunately, the native Press makes little progress. The daily journal is an exotic in the Central Kingdom, and has been a precarious existence. There is scarcely a single flourishing native newspaper in China with the exception of those owned and managed by foreigners, and most of those started under purely native auspices have speedily succumbed. Newspaper enterprise, consequently, languishes in China, in spite of the fact that the Chinese are a reading people. This is greatly to be regretted, because it is by the agency of the Press that a healthy public opinion must be created and progressive ideas promulgated. As an illustration of what would happen if China possessed a Press like Japan for instance, it is only necessary to point to the able and thoughtful article on the separation of the sexes in China, re-published in our columns from the *Shen-pao*. Such expressions of opinion as that of the *Shen-pao* are most useful and should have an extensive circulation. But how many out of the millions of China will see and read the article in question? The *Shen-pao* has a circulation of some thousands, but the mass of the people never even hear of it. Such an article as that to which we are referring should be circulated throughout the length and breadth of the Celestial Empire. The *Shen-pao* most heartily backs up his Brethren Kwong Seng-tao in his recent departure from Chinese traditions in allowing his wife to be present to receive his guests at the reception given by him at the Legation. After remarking that the presence of Mrs. Kwong gave decided satisfaction to foreigners, the *Shen-pao* proceeds to observe that had such an innovation been made by Kwong at his villa in China "he would have been ridiculed and called vicious and dissipated. Chinese decorum declares the sexes should be separated, and that if Kwong's example be followed, and unrestricted social intercourse allowed, the body cannot be rectified, nor the family ruled, and if the family cannot be ruled, how can the State be governed; starting indeed. But this separation is, after all, a mere formal part of decorum." The *Shen-pao* then goes to prove from history that the stringent rules now adopted by the Chinese for the exclusion of women did not always prevail. This it recalls to mind the fact that Hwang and Yung, ancient Empresses, ruled at the Palace, and governed as able as men. "I, Yung, wife of Yung Wang," it says, "was styled Minister, and assisted Wang and Saw in many public affairs without any scruples about seeing each other. The I Ta, too, says when presents are sent to a Prince's wife, she ought to receive the presents in the palace and accompany them to the door when leaving, thus showing interviews were then allowed. In the time of Spring and Autumn virtuous and able ladies did not remain secluded out of sight in the female apartments."

Such were the customs among the ancient princes; but as time went on this liberty was curtailed, and the women were more and more jealously confined to the house. As the *Shen-pao* points out, this isolation from the rest of mankind has not tended to improve the morals or intelligence of Chinese women. Forbidden intercourse with any member of the opposite sex, they have had to fall back upon their resources, with the result that their minds are usually occupied with trivialities and petty vanities. Too much regard is, our native contemporary, urged, paid to outward appearance, too little to the results of the system. Speaking of the contrast afforded by two foreigners and Chinese on this point, it says:—"In the social intercourse between men and women of Western nations, there does not appear to be much regard shown for appearance, but their custom appears more effective against vice than China's does, where women do not walk out or seldom see their relations, but where the evil odour of indecorous proceedings reaches on high up to Heaven, thus proving that restrictions in China are excessive and that too much attention is paid to mere form. Foreign men and women meet and take their meals together without harm, thus showing they regard mere form with scanty respect; but not withstanding their freedom in this respect, the strictness of their behaviour shows how they esteem real decorum." Throughout the *Shen-pao* exhibits a most intelligent appreciation of the question, and is strongly in favour of the emancipation of Chinese women from the seclusion to which a remorseless and stupid custom has condemned them. At the same time it sees roots ahead in the path of reform in this matter. China may recognise the advisability of freer social intercourse between the sexes, but she is chained to custom and etiquette. It would do more to dissipate prejudices and forward progress if a goodly number of the Chinese "upper ten" could be induced to travel.

POLICE COURT.

9th September.

REPORT BY MR. CHARLES MAY.

JOHN DUNN, a seaman on the British steamer *Paladin*, was charged by P.C. 847 with being drunk in the Hollywood road.—Fined fifty cents.

JOHN McDONALD, a seaman on the British bark *Albatross*, was charged by P.C. 683 with being drunk and running after people in the Hollywood road.—Fined fifty cents, and ordered to pay costs for this case; in default, one day's imprisonment.

CORNELIUS OVERBAK, a seaman on the British ship *Berle Rigdon*, was charged by P.C. 826 with being drunk in the Hollywood road.—Fined fifty cents, and ordered to pay costs for this case; in default, one day's imprisonment.

JAMES COX, a seaman on the British bark *Albatross*, was charged by P.C. 381 with being drunk and running after people in the Hollywood road.—Fined fifty cents, and ordered to pay costs for this case; in default, one day's imprisonment.

JAMES RILEY, a seaman, unemployed, was charged with being drunk and incapable.—Fined fifty cents, and ordered to pay costs for this case; in default, one day's imprisonment.

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